

THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE

EIGHT YEARS AGO THE 'PUNK MOVEMENT' ROSE OUT OF THE DESPERATION AND ANGER THAT WE HAD ALL BEEN FEELING, ABOUT THE WAY IN WHICH OUR LIVES, AND OUR WORLD WAS BEING CONTROLLED AND RUINED BY THE STATE.

AT THIS TIME WE HAD NO WAY OF MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD, SO WE CREATED ONE. WE BEGAN BY TELLING THE BIG BUSINESSES TO FUCK OFF - WE DIDN'T NEED THEM. WE ORGANISED OUR OWN GIGS AND PUT OUT OUR OWN RECORDS, ALL UNDER OUR OWN CONTROL AND AT PRICES WE COULD ALL AFFORD.

ROUGH TRADE AND THE OTHER 'INDEPENDANTS' FORMED AN ALTERNATIVE DISTRIBUTION NETWORK, AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE WE HAD OUR OWN WORKABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE MUSIC BUSINESS - MUSIC FOR THE PEOPLE, PLAYED BY THE PEOPLE, AND ORGANISED BY THE PEOPLE.

OF COURSE WE WERE LET DOWN BY THOSE WHO WERE UNABLE TO RESIST THE TEMPTATIONS OFFERED BY THE MUSIC BUSINESS - THE CLASH BECAME THE NEW ROLLING STONES, AND SOME OF THE SO CALLED INDIE LABELS MADE BUSINESS DEALS WITH THE MAJORS.

BUT WHILE THERE WERE A FEW THAT GRABBED AT THE CHANCE OF A FEW SECONDS GLORY STRUTTING IN THE ARENAS PROVIDED BY THE MUSIC BUSINESS, MANY MORE OF US WENT ON TO TURN OUR VISIONS OF LOVE, HOPE, SHARING, AND CARING INTO A REALITY.

WE BELIEVED THAT BY SHARING OUR VISIONS, IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES; BY MAKING AVAILABLE INFORMATION NOT NORMALLY AVAILABLE; AND BY ACTUALLY LIVING A WORKABLE ALTERNATIVE WE COULD CREATE AND BUILD UP SUFFICIENT DESIRE FOR CHANGE; THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO SUCH A CHANGE COMING ABOUT.

EIGHT YEARS LATER IT HAS BECOME OBVIOUS THAT THIS IS NOT ENOUGH. ROUGH TRADE AND THE CARTEL HAVE NOW GOT SO MANY BUSINESS DEALS ARRANGED WITH THE MAJOR LABELS, THAT THEY HAVE BECOME JUST ANOTHER MAJOR.

THE ALTERNATIVE CHARTS HAVE BECOME A COMPLETE AND UTTER FARCE - HOW CAN ANYBODY BELIEVE THAT THE SMITHS, OR ELVIS COSTELLO, OR THE COCK TOE TWINS OFFER ANYTHING ALTERNATIVE. YOU ONLY HAVE TO HEAR THEIR RECORDS OR SEE THEM ON TOP OF THE POPS TO SEE THAT THEY ARE JUST THE SAME AS THE REST OF THE MINDLESS PAP.

I'M TRYING NOT TO PUT TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE ON THE PUNK MOVEMENT - AFTER ALL IT WAS JUST A LABEL CREATED BY THE MEDIA TO PIGEON HOLE THESE 'DIFFERENT PEOPLE'. TAKE AWAY THE LABEL AND ALL YOU HAVE LEFT IS THE PEOPLE - AND THAT'S WHAT REALLY HURTS.

I BELIEVED IN PEOPLE LIKE THE CLASH AND ROUGH TRADE, I BELIEVED THAT THEY CARED AND MEANT WHAT THEY SAID. I BELIEVED THAT ALL OF US TOGETHER WERE CREATING AN ALTERNATIVE TOGETHER.

BUT FOR EACH OF THE DISHONEST SHITS THAT HAVE LET ME DOWN THERE HAVE BEEN MANY MORE THAT HAVN'T - AND I STILL BELIEVE THAT DESPITE THE SELLOUTS AND CONTRADICTIONS WE CAN STILL MAKE OUR ALTERNATIVE WORK - NOT JUST WITHIN THE MUSIC BUSINESS - BUT WITHIN THE WHOLE WORLD.

SOMEONE ONCE CAME UP TO ME AT A GIG AND SAID WE WERE IN DANGER OF BECOMING AS VICIOUS AND PERNICIOUS TOOL AS DALLAS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE WAS VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WAY DALLAS ENTERTAINED AND APPEASED PEOPLE; AND THE WAY IN WHICH ANGRY FRUSTRATED PEOPLE CAME TO OUR GIGS - ENJOYED THEMSELVES, AND WENT AWAY FEELING RELIEVED ONCE THAT ANGER AND FRUSTRATION HAD BEEN GIVEN SOME FORM OF ESCAPE.

TO A CERTAIN EXTENT I AGREE WITH HIM - BUT WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO USE 'MUSIC' TO GIVE A MESSAGE YOU FIND YOURSELF TRYING TO GET A WORKABLE BALANCE BETWEEN 'ENJOYMENT' AND 'COMMUNICATION'. IF YOU'RE TOO ENJOYABLE AND UNDEMANDING THE CONTENTS OF THE MESSAGE GET LOST, AND IF YOU'RE NOT ENJOYABLE ENOUGH NO ONE IS PREPARED TO LISTEN TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.

DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS I HAVE BEEN FEELING MORE AND MORE FRUSTRATED WORKING IN A BAND - HOW CAN YOU KEEP PUTTING OUT RECORDS AND DOING GIGS THAT ARE INEFFECTIVE - AND HOW DO YOU AVOID BECOMING JUST ANOTHER ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND?

I KNOW THAT THERE IS SO MUCH GROUND THAT CAN BE EXPLORED IF PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO DEVELOP AND PUSH THEMSELVES FURTHER, WITH IDEAS AS WELL AS WITH MUSIC.

WE CAN'T GO ON RETREADING THE SAME GROUND WHEN WE KNOW THAT WE ARN'T GETTING ANYWHERE.

REASONING WITH THE AUTHORITIES HAS NOT WORKED - THE RECENT C.N.D. PROTEST MARCHES (AND COUNTLESS OTHER PROTESTS) HAS HAD NO EFFECT ON CURBING THE GOVERNMENTS MILITARY BUILD UP.



IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WE HAVE GOT TO GO BEYOND JUST REASONING - BUT WHERE I DON'T KNOW.

I THOUGHT THAT DIRECT ACTION WAS THE DIRECTION TO GO IN, BUT HAVING SEEN THE WAY THE POLICE HAVE GOT MORE VICIOUS AND ORGANISED ON EACH SUCCESSIVE STOP THE CITY PROTEST I'M NO LONGER SURE.

I'M AGAINST CREATING A THEM AND US WAR SITUATION WITH THE STATE AS OUR ENEMY. BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW WE CAN AVOID SUCH A SITUATION WHEN THE STATE HAS IDENTIFIED US AS THEIR ENEMY: AND WHEN I SAY US I MEAN ANYONE WHO DOESN'T QUITE TOW THE LINE.

THATCHERS STATE POLICE DON'T DISCRIMINATE WHEN THEY LASH OUT. THE PUNKS, GAY MINERS, BLACKS AND ANY OTHER MINORITY GROUP CAN EXPECT TO BE, AND HAVE BEEN, DEALT THE SAME VICIOUS FACISTIC BLOW BY THE STATE.

THE PROBLEM WE NOW FIND OURSELVES IN, IS THAT AS WE STEP UP OUR ACTIONS AGAINST THE STATE, THE STATE STEPS UP ITS RESPONSES TO THOSE ACTIONS. UNLESS WE COME UP WITH SOMETHING SOON WE WILL ALL BE STAMPED OUT OR FORCED INTO A SITUATION WHERE WE HAVE TO ARM OURSELVES AND FIGHT AND PERHAPS KILL ON THE STREET.

I DON'T WANT TO BE IN A SITUATION WHERE I HAVE TO TAKE A DECISION WHETHER TO KILL OR BE KILLED - AND I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT TO, OR EVEN FEEL ABLE TO MAKE THOSE KIND OF DECISIONS FOR ANYONE ELSE.

SO SOMEHOW WE HAVE TO FIND SOME OTHER ALTERNATIVE; AND WE NEED TO FIND IT SOON BEFORE WE ARE FORCED INTO TAKING ACTIONS, WHICH IF WE ACT NOW WE CAN PROBABLY AVOID.

I HAVN'T GOT THE ANSWERS, BUT I DO KNOW THAT WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO NIT PICK OVER ISSUES, BECAUSE WHILE WE WEIGH UP THE PRO'S AND CON'S OUR WORLD IS BEING DESTROYED.

THE TIME HAS COME TO FORGET THE SMALL DIFFERENCES THAT WE HAVE WITH EACH OTHER, AND WE NEED TO START WORKING TOGETHER ON THE COMMON GROUND THAT WE SHARE TO HALT THATCHER BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

MANY DIFFERENT GROUPS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN WORKING TOGETHER. RECENTLY THE GREENHAM WOMEN SPOKE AT A MINERS RALLY BECAUSE THEY HAD BOTH SEEN THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE RUNNING DOWN OF THE COAL INDUSTRY AND THE BUILD UP OF THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY.

THE A.L.F. HAVE MOVED INTO BROADER ACTIONS WITH THEIR NEW SLOGAN 'ANIMAL LIBERATION, HUMAN RIGHTS, ONE STRUGGLE, ONE FIGHT', HAVING REALISED THAT THE LIBERATION OF ANIMALS AND HUMANS MUST GO HAND IN HAND.

THE ONLY REAL POWER WE HAVE IS EACH OTHER, AND WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAINTAIN THAT POWER. IF THE STATE MANAGES TO DIVIDE US UP AMONGST OURSELVES THEY WILL EVENTUALLY MANAGE TO DESTROY US.

WHILE WE STAY TOGETHER, WORK TOGETHER, CARE FOR EACH OTHER, HELP EACH OTHER THEY ARE FUCKED.

TOGETHER WE ARE UNBEATABLE.

WHEN I WAS AT SCHOOL MY SPORTS TEACHER WAS TEACHING ME TO SWIM AND GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING ADVICE. "YOU CAN ONLY TREAD WATER FOR SO LONG, AND UNLESS YOU SWIM ON YOU WILL EVENTUALLY TIRE YOURSELF OUT AND DROWN."

THATCHER AND HER CRONIES ARE ALL STANDING AT THE POOL EDGE WATCHING US ALL TREAD WATER. DO WE SWIM OR DROWN?

I KNOW IT'S ONLY ROCK'N'ROLL BUT I LIKE IT

*It could be  
So much more*

FLUX